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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UG](#) [SU](#) [CG](#)  
SUBJECT: NORTHERN UGANDA: MILITARY OFFICIALS PESSIMISTIC  
ABOUT CONGOLESE AND MONUC'S PLANS TO ATTACK LRA

REF: A. KINSHASA 1099

[1](#)B. KINSHASA 1100

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Classified By: P/E Chief Kathleen FitzGibbon for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Africa Bureau Deputy Assistant Secretary James Swan and Senior Advisor for Conflict Resolution Tim Shortley discussed Congolese plans for dealing with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Garamba National Park with Ugandan officials. The meeting took place at the conclusion of the Tripartite Plus Commission in Kampala on September 17.

The Ugandan civilian and military officials expressed skepticism that the Congolese army and MONUC could conduct a successful operation against the LRA. DAS Swan and Shortley pointed out that it would be important for Uganda to engage the Congolese military officials on the specifics of their plans, including the objective of an operation. Defense Minister Kiyonga welcomed U.S. statements that the peace process could not be open-ended and was receptive to intensifying coordination within the Ugandan government and with neighboring governments. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) On September 17, Africa Bureau Deputy Assistant Secretary James Swan, Shortley, P/E Chief, and Defense

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Attache met with Minister of Defense Crispus Kiyonga, Chief of Defense Forces Aronda, Chief of Military Intelligence Colonel Leopold Kyanda, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director for East Africa and Ring States, Julius Kagamba on the heels of the Tripartite Plus ministerial meeting. Senior Advisor Shortley gave a short brief of his recent travel to Kinshasa and meeting with President Joseph Kabila. (Reftels) Shortley reported that Kabila promised that after December, if no progress was made on the peace talks, Kabila would tell the LRA that it was no longer welcome in Garamba National Park. Meanwhile, MONUC was training two battalions of Congolese army forces to be ready in January for use in operations against the LRA.

[1](#)3. (C) Defense Minister Kiyonga outlined the key points from SRSB Bill Swing's presentation to the Tripartite Plus ministers that highlighted limitations to MONUC's planned operations against negative forces, including the LRA. Swing emphasized MONUC's limitations, including that the area of operation for MONUC was too large for the size of its forces.

He also stated that MONUC was unable to track negative forces, including the LRA, into heavily forested areas. Swing also described ongoing three-month-long "crash training" of Congolese army forces numbering 33 battalions. In addition, an airstrip at Dungu was being refurbished from

which MONUC and FARDC operations against the LRA would be launched. Kiyonga also noted that Swing claimed that MONUC suffered from inadequate intelligence.

14. (C) Shortley emphasized that the U.S. Government preferred that the LRA problem be resolved peacefully and stated that the U.S. would take an active approach to supporting the peace process, including pushing long-term priorities such as the Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan (PRDP). However, if the talks failed, a credible response would be needed and contingency plans would need to be in place. Shortley told Kabila that MONUC was not pushing fast enough on contingency plans. Kabila told Shortley that Congo would cooperate with Uganda if there were spill-over from operations against the LRA. Congo would not, however, engage in a coordinated effort with Uganda.

15. (C) DAS Swan asked what would be MONUC's and/or the Ugandan military's primary objective in operations against the LRA. Aronda and Kyanda were categorical that the Uganda objective would be to destroy and capture the LRA leadership. However, MONUC's objective might be only to disrupt the LRA's ability to operate in Garamba. Swan suggested that given the Congolese army's weaknesses, it might be unrealistic for it to defeat the LRA. Instead, a Congolese operation might be more geared to disruption of LRA activities, force its members to flee, or persuade its leaders to negotiate seriously for peace. Shortley recommended that the Ugandan military clarify the objective of the plan Congo presented at the Tripartite meeting.

16. (C) Shortley also said that Congolese Foreign Minister Mbusa and Presidential Advisor Kapanga were traveling to Khartoum to discuss Congo's border with Sudan and the LRA in addition to implementation of the Arusha agreement. Shortley outlined steps the U.S. was taking to think through the various scenarios for the LRA leaders if they choose a peaceful resolution, and other steps to strengthen the ongoing peace process. He solicited recommendations on the types of pressure that could be applied to bring the talks to

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a successful conclusion.

17. (C) General Aronda was pessimistic that there could be a peaceful solution to the LRA problem. In his view, the LRA continued to violate the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. The LRA had not complied with anything it had agreed to and should not be rewarded. Aronda said that Kony had declared that the war lasted 20 years and that it would take 20 years to conclude peace. Aronda interpreted statements from Kony, Vincent Otti, and Juba Delegation Leader Martin Ojul to mean that Kony was waiting for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to lose meaning. Aronda said that "underhand deals between Khartoum, Congo, and the LRA" remained an important dynamic in the situation. He asserted that Congo was content to keep the LRA in Uganda's backyard until it was clear that former Vice President Bemba was no longer a threat.

18. (C) Aronda pointed out that there was a stand-off developing between Khartoum and Juba over the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) which might require the calling of an extra-ordinary summit of Inter-Governmental Development Authority (IGAD) leaders. Given the environment of escalating tensions between north and south Sudan, Aronda questioned Khartoum's willingness to "let the LRA go." For Aronda, LRA assembly would be an indication that Kony might take the next step toward peace and sign an agreement.

19. (C) DAS Swan encouraged the Ugandans to look at the coordination of contingency plans that might be needed. Aronda questioned the use of peacekeepers, who might not be properly trained for offensive operations, rather than special forces in an assault against the LRA. Aronda found it disturbing that an entire brigade of Congolese soldiers

virtually collapsed before &the likes8 of Laurent Nkunda in the recent fighting. Swan said that it would be difficult for MONUC and the Congolese army to fight the Rwandan and Ugandan negative forces simultaneously. Aronda agreed that the reality of the situation was that combined forces could only tackle one negative force at a time. Swan asked if a sequence that focused on one negative force at a time might be more practical and realistic.

¶10. (C) Shortley also recommended close coordination with the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) to conduct full-time negotiations and develop a timeline for how the talks will conclude. Kiyonga asked what leverage the U.S. Government had on Khartoum. Shortley described the impact of current U.S. economic sanctions on Sudan's banking sector. P/E Chief asked Aronda if Uganda had concrete information on contact between Khartoum and the LRA that could be shared. He said yes.

¶11. (C) Shortley recommended that political and military strategies develop in parallel to increase pressure on the LRA to negotiate seriously as the calendar and negotiations talks proceed, and which could accelerate the peace process. Kiyonga agreed. Shortley suggested that the same group, with additional inter-agency players, such as Rugunda and Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials meet again in a month's time to pull together its objectives and develop a coordinated strategy.

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¶12. (C) Ugandan military officials remain pessimistic that LRA leaders Kony and Otti will agree to a peace deal. A key gap in strategy remains the building of confidence through coordinated incentives and disintives to persuade Kony and Otti to give up. Swan and Shortley urged Kiyonga and Aronda not to allow their skepticism of the capacity of Congo and MONUC to conduct successful military operation against the LRA to hinder efforts to coordinate with them. It is clear that Ugandan military planning is not coordinated with other relevant ministries, such as the MFA and Ministry of Internal Affairs, and that the GOU did not have a coordinated, unified strategy to move the peace process or military contingency planning forward.  
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